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CAPO DI MONTE PORCELAIN

It is well known that for many years reproductions of the celebrated Capo di Monte porcelain, produced in the 18th century near Naples, Italy, have been made extensively at several factories in Europe, especially for the American market, and it is not surprising, therefore, that quantities of so-called Capo di Monte ware are to be found in public and private collections and



PAIR OF CAPO DI MONTE CANDLESTICKS
Hard Paste, 1760-1800

among the bric-a-brac which adorns the houses of hundreds of well-to-do people. When the Capo di Monte factory was closed about 1820, many of the moulds used there were secured by the Ginori factory, at Doccia, Italy, where the same designs have been reproduced, often with the old marks, down to the present time. Other factories, in France, Germany and Austria, have also been imitating this porcelain for fraudulent purposes, although several reputable factories, including those at Meissen, Germany, and Herend, Austria, have for years been producing hard paste porcelain in the Capo di Monte style, but bearing the marks of their own factories. While the latter strongly resembles the genuine ware, it is not intended to deceive.

Genuine pieces of hard paste Capo di Monte porcelain are exceedingly rare and few examples are to be found in European museums, outside of Italy. In the United States they are practically unknown, and it is doubtful whether

there are any authentic specimens in the colored relief style in any public institution, outside of the Pennsylvania Museum. Many pieces will be found in the museums of this country posing as Capo di Monte, but, in reality, they are, probably without exception, modern imitations of the old ware. It is just possible that among the large number of pieces exhibited, a few may be genuine, but thus far they have not been recognized as such.*

The Pennsylvania Museum has received from time to time, by gift or bequest, many fine examples of so-called Capo di Monte, some of which are exceedingly elaborate in decoration and good in color, but these have invariably



CAPO DI MONTE CUP AND SAUCER
Hard Paste, 1760-1800

proved to be modern imitations. For several years the Museum has been endeavoring to secure some authentic examples, and not until a few weeks ago have these efforts been successful. A recent purchase in London, England, of five pieces of unquestionably genuine Capo di Monte has been added to the Museum collection, and by means of these it is possible to distinguish the genuine from the false, between which there are many points of difference, such as color of the paste, method of gilding, excellence of workmanship, sharpness of reliefs, etc. The pieces recently acquired include a cup and saucer with relief designs representing on one side the Triumph of Bacchus, and on the other Ceres in her chariot. These are from the collection of Rev. T. Staniforth, who secured them at the celebrated sale of the Bernal collection, in 1855. A pair of candlesticks with full length figures, one of a girl and the other of a man in Oriental costume, are good examples of figure modeling from this factory. A seau, or ice pail, with figure decoration in high relief, representing

*Since the above was written the writer has found two genuine pieces of Capo di Monte of the second, or hard paste, period, in the Metropolitan Museum, New York.

Apollo and Daphne, and handles in form of hooded dolphins, is a particularly choice example of this style of ware. This little group represents the best period of the Capo di Monte factory, when hard paste was manufactured, from about 1759 to 1800.

The imitations, which are so numerous, are of hard paste of exceeding whiteness, which may be readily distinguished from the genuine ware, which



CAPO DI MONTE SEAU OR ICE BOWL
Hard Paste, 1760-1800

is of a pronounced grayish green color. The body of the imitations is of much finer grain than that of the genuine, which as a rule is coarse and boldly modeled.

The museum is also in possession of an earlier piece, made at Naples, previous to 1759, which is of artificial soft paste, decorated in flat colors and devoid of modeled designs. Several good examples of the first period are owned by Rev. Alfred Duane Pell, of New York.

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